Eradication of rural poverty

*407. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any long term measures for total eradication of rural poverty of the country;

(b) if so, the target year, if any;

(c) what is the actual figure of rural poverty in India today;

(d) whether such figure is higher in STs and SCs than other communities; and

(e) if so, Government's plan to tackle the problem?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) The Government is committed to eradicate rural poverty. To achieve this, the Government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty in the country. It comprises (i) accelerated economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti-poverty programmes. The Tenth Five Year Plan envisaged that if the GDP growth target of 8 per cent per annum were attained, the poverty ratio would be reduced by 5 percentage points by 2007 and 15 percentage points by 2012.

2. Planning Commission estimates poverty at national and State level from the large sample survey on 'Household Consumer Expenditure' conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. According to the latest such survey conducted during 1999-2000 (55th Round), the number of persons living below the poverty line in the rural areas of the country was 193.2 million (27.09 per cent of the total persons living below the poverty line). It is estimated that 36.25 percentage of Scheduled Castes and 45.86 percentage of the Scheduled Tribes live below the poverty line in rural areas.

3. In order to improve the living conditions of the rural poor and to uplift them above the poverty line, the Government in the Ministry of Rural Development is implementing two major employment generation schemes namely Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and Sampoorna

Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY). The Government have also launched a new wage employment scheme namely National Food For Works Programme (NFFWP) in 150 most backward districts of 27 States of the country in order to generate supplementary wage employment and to provide food security through creation of need based economic, social and community assets in these districts. NFFWP is open to the rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual unskilled work. To provide employment in the rural areas to the needy, a comprehensive Bill known as "National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill" has been recently framed and introduced in the Parliament.

4. The SGSY particularly focuses on vulnerable groups among the rural poor. Guidelines stipulate that the SCs/STs will account for atleast 50% of the Swarozgaris assisted, and that the subsidy provided to the SC/STs persons would also be at a higher rate of 50% of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 10,000/. Under the Sampooma Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), 22.5% of the resources given to each District and intermediate-level panchayat must be spent on individual beneficiary/ group schemes for SCs/STs below the poverty line. Besides, out of the earmarked resources at Gram Panchayat level a minimum of 50% share of the resources is meant for creation of need-based village infrastructure in SC/ST habitations/wards. Under the National Food For Works Programme (NFFWP), 150 most backward districts were identified by the Planning Commission on the basis of proportion of SC/ST population, agricultural productivity per worker and agricultural wage rates ensuring due preference for the SC/ST population.

Sugar import from India by Pakistan

† *408. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:
SHRI RS. GAVAI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently Pakistan Government has lifted the ban on sugar import from India and now Government are considering to export the sugar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.